

# PREPAREDNESS:

A South Carolinian's guide to  
disaster preparedness.

## TACTICS AGAINST TERRORISM: **PREPAREDNESS**

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control  
Office of Public Health Preparedness

## **My fellow South Carolinians,**

Our state is joining with others to place greater attention on disaster preparedness. As the state's lead agency for protecting the health of citizens and our environment, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) is actively involved in planning, preparing and exercising our responses to disasters – both natural and man-made.

It is our shared responsibility to plan and be prepared for disasters. Failing to plan makes the problem worse.

Together with the S.C. Law Enforcement Division, Emergency Management Division and other responders, we ask the question "what if." What if a category 5 hurricane hits our coastline? What if there is a biological attack on our people, animals or crops? What if there is a chemical attack? What if a strong earthquake rattles our state? What if an ice storm cuts off power to our homes for several weeks? What if our seaports, airports or highways are attacked?

We are answering these questions by creating and practicing disaster response plans for all types of situations.

Safety is a shared responsibility. Individuals and families must also have disaster response plans. Having a plan - and making sure everyone in the family understands what to do - is the best way to protect your health during a disaster.

DHEC has prepared this booklet on personal preparedness to help you make a disaster response plan. By taking steps to prepare yourself and your family, you become part of the solution - not the problem.

If you need more information, please go to our Web site at <http://www.scdhec.gov>. Be safe, be smart, and make a plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "C. Earl Hunter".

C. Earl Hunter, Commissioner  
*South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control*

## **Why do I need to be prepared for a disaster?**

Most people think acts of terrorism or natural disasters like earthquakes, floods and hurricanes happen to people in other places. The truth is, disasters can happen to anyone at any time. Everyone should have a plan to be safe and protect themselves and their families. Remember that disasters happen quickly and without warning.

## **How real is the threat of a disaster?**

No one thought an act of terrorism like that of September 11, 2001 would ever happen in the United States. But it did. Terrorists continue to make threats – even today. We have to be prepared in case they strike again.

There are other disasters that can happen at any time. A train or truck carrying dangerous chemicals could spill its contents and harm people. A manufacturing plant might have an explosion and release harmful fumes into the air. Equipment at a nuclear power plant could malfunction, allowing the release of radiation.

Natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, ice storms, floods and forest fires can hurt people, too. South Carolina must prepare for the possibility of many types of disasters.

This booklet is meant to help you be safe and smart. There is strength in knowing how to prepare and respond. Because disasters can and do happen in South Carolina, everyone should have a disaster plan and know what to do.

## **What are the threats?**

### **Terrorism**

Terrorists want to hurt many people at one time. They use different types of weapons that cause different types of damage. All are very dangerous. Here are some of the more common types of terrorism:

- Bioterrorism
- Chemical terrorism
- Radiological terrorism
- Agro terrorism
- Explosive devices

## **Bioterrorism**

Bioterrorism is the intentional use of bacteria, viruses, or natural toxins (poisons) to kill, injure or produce disease in humans, animals or plants. Most biological agents are difficult to grow and maintain. Many are weakened when exposed to sunlight, but some — such as anthrax spores — live for longer periods.

Disease can be intentionally spread, infecting animals and people, or by contaminating food or water supplies.

## **Chemical terrorism**

Chemical terrorism is the use of any chemical agent as a weapon. Chemical agents are poisonous vapors, aerosols, liquids or solids that have dangerous effects on people, animals or plants. Chemicals used as weapons usually attack the organs of the body. Some are odorless and tasteless, and they can be released by bombs, sprayed into ventilation systems, sprayed from aircraft, boats or other vehicles, or used to create a hazard to people and the environment.

## **Radiological terrorism**

Radiological terrorism is the intentional release of radiation or radioactive material into the environment. These materials can be released through the water supply, as a mist in the air, through an explosion, or left in a place where people can be exposed to them.

One method is the use of a “dirty bomb,” which is an explosive device that has radioactive materials in it. A dirty bomb is not the same as a nuclear bomb. The main danger from a dirty bomb is the explosion itself. However, it can also contaminate a large area.

Radiation cannot be seen and requires special equipment to be detected. If people come into contact with radiation, they can get very sick and die. You might not get sick right away. You might get sick months — or even years — after a radiological attack.

Nuclear terrorism also creates radiation. However, nuclear terrorism involves the use of an extremely powerful explosive that has the ability to instantly kill people and destroy buildings. Like a “dirty bomb,” it leaves radioactive material behind, capable of hurting more people.

Once radioactivity is detected, it is important to limit your exposure to it. This is done by considering three factors:

- Time — reduce your personal risk by minimizing the time you are exposed to the radioactive source.

- Distance – the greater the distance between you and the radioactive source, the better.
- Shielding – place a thick shield, such as a concrete wall, between yourself and the radioactive source.

### **Improvised explosive devices (IEDs)**

IEDs are bombs that are constructed from common materials that are generally easy to obtain. For instance, terrorists could use materials commonly found in hardware or grocery stores to create these dangerous weapons. Sometimes, radiological materials might be added to create a “dirty bomb.”

### **What is agroterrorism?**

Agroterrorism is an attack on food or agricultural products. Biological, chemical, radiological and other agents are added to food to make people sick. Agroterrorism is not common. However, we must pay attention and keep our food supplies, livestock and farms safe from attack.

### **Other disasters can threaten our families**

Acts of terrorism aren’t the only disasters that threaten public health and safety. The following are some other disasters to consider when making your plan:

#### **Man-made accidents**

- Chemical explosions
- Ships and tanker leaks
- Train derailments
- Truck crashes
- Nuclear plant releases

#### **Natural disasters**

- Floods
- Forest fires
- Hurricanes
- Ice storms
- Tornadoes
- Earthquakes
- Pandemics

## What could happen during a disaster?

**A disaster can cause damage, confusion and injuries. This can include:**

- Large explosions or fire
- Damage to buildings
- Deadly clouds of dust and debris
- Dead animals, fish and birds
- People who become scared and confused
- Many injured or dead people, who could be contaminated by biological, chemical or radiological materials
- Busy and overcrowded hospitals and emergency rooms
- Evacuation of large areas, cities and counties
- Roadblocks and searches of cars and people
- Closing of public places like schools, government buildings, churches and stores
- Curfews
- Separation of sick or potentially sick people from healthy people.

## Be Safe, Be Smart: **Make a Plan**

You and your family might not have much time to act if there is a disaster. Having a plan now will help you be prepared. It will help you stay calm. It could also save lives. Remember to go over your plans with your family so everyone knows what to do to be safe.

### **Create a plan for your home**

Meet with your family to discuss why you need to prepare for a disaster. Here are the steps to take:

1. **Discuss disasters.** Discuss types of disasters and what might happen. For example, explain to your children the dangers of an explosion, a fire or severe weather. Explain what each family member must do to be safe.
2. **Choose a family contact person.** Ask a friend or family member who lives out of town to be your “family contact person.” The contact person should live far enough away that they wouldn’t be affected by the same disaster. Sometimes it is easier to make a long-distance phone call than a local phone call during an emergency.

Each family member should contact this person after a disaster or in an emergency. This way, each member of the family can let the contact person know where he or she is. They can find out if other family members are safe and where they are.

Make sure each family member has the contact person's information. It can be a home, work, pager and cell phone number or an email address. Make sure each family member has each other's contact information, too.

3. **Choose a family meeting place.** Pick two different places where your family should meet, depending on the emergency situation.
  - A location that is a short, but safe, distance outside your home in case of a sudden emergency, such as a fire.
  - A location outside your neighborhood in case you must evacuate and/or cannot return home.

You might want to choose a family member or friend's house. Be sure to include your pets in this plan because they are not allowed in shelters and in many hotels.

4. **Know your children's school emergency plan.** If you have school-age children, contact their schools to learn about the emergency plans. Make sure your child's school has your phone number or the number of another family member or friend who can pick your child up from school if you can't.

**It is important to know:**

- How the school will communicate with parents and caregivers during an emergency.
  - If the school has enough food, water and supplies.
  - If the school is prepared to shelter-in-place. (See "Sheltering in Place")
  - If the school will keep children until a parent or designated adult can pick them up.
  - If the school has designated an alternate pickup location during emergencies.
  - If you cannot pick up your child from school, what permission is needed to release him or her to the family member or friend?
5. **Make a plan for your pets and farm animals.** It will be difficult to find a safe place for your animals to stay. American Red Cross shelters and most other shelters cannot accept pets because of state health and safety rules. There are



some exceptions. Service animals like guide dogs that help people with disabilities are the only animals allowed in shelters.

## What to do with pets in an evacuation

If you cannot keep your pets with you, find other places outside of your area for your pets to stay.

- Hotel or motel. Check with hotels and motels outside your area about their pet policies. Find out if “no pet” policies are waived in an emergency.
- Friends or family. Ask a friend or family member outside the affected area if they can shelter your animal.
- The kennel or vet. Prepare a list of boarding facilities or veterinarians who can shelter animals in an emergency.
- Local animal shelters. Ask your local animal shelter if they provide emergency shelter.

*Keep a current list of contacts and phone numbers for places where your pet could stay.*

## Make a disaster kit for your pet

**Your pet will need food and supplies, too. It should include:**

- Food, water and bowl
- Can opener
- Cat litter and pan
- Current photo of your pet in case it gets lost
- Medications, vaccination records and medical records stored in a waterproof container
- Small first aid kit
- Disposable pet waste bags
- A carrier for dogs and cats, a container for small pets like birds and guinea pigs
- Tattoo or microchip information, if applicable.

## What to do with large farm animals

It is harder to find shelter for larger animals like cows or horses. This is especially true during emergencies. You might have to leave larger animals behind, but here are steps to take to keep them safe:

- Make sure all animals have some form of identification.
- Evacuate them if possible. Map out primary and secondary routes you can take. Use those routes designated by the state Department of Transportation as a guide.
- Make available the proper vehicles and trailers to transport the animals and have experienced people help you.
- Ensure the animals' destination has food, water, veterinary care and handling equipment.
- If evacuation is not possible, you must decide whether to move large animals to shelter or put them outside. It might be necessary to place them on stored food and water.

## Sheltering in place

### Make a Disaster Supplies Kit

If there is an emergency, you might need to stay inside your home for a few hours or a few days. This is known as “sheltering in place.” You will not be able to leave to go to the store, out to a restaurant, church or other destination. This is why you need to keep certain things needed for every day life like clean water, food and clothing. If you make a disaster supplies kit ahead of time, you will have what you need to be as safe as possible. Make sure everyone in your family knows where the kit is kept.

Keep the items you would most likely need in an easy-to-carry container, such as a backpack, duffel bag or plastic trash container with a lid. If you have to evacuate, you can take the kit with you.

### Contents of your kit

**Water.** Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will break or allow the contents to spoil. You will need to replace the water every three months.

- Store at least one gallon of water for each person for each day, plus water for pets. Plan for at least three days.
- Keep containers in a cool, dark place with the date labeled on the container.

**Food.** Store at least a three-day supply of nonperishable food. This means foods that do not need to be refrigerated, prepared, or can be cooked with little or no water. Choose foods items that do not weigh much. You will need to replace the food every six months.

Include these foods:

- Ready-to-eat meats, fruits and vegetables in cans or pouches
- Canned or boxed juices
- Staples such as sugar, salt and pepper
- High-energy foods like peanut butter and jelly, granola bars and trail mix
- Vitamins
- Foods for babies and elderly adults
- Comfort/stress foods like coffee, cookies and sweetened cereals
- Pet food

**First aid kit.** Make a first aid kit for your home and one for each family car.

Each first aid kit should contain:

- Prescription medicines
- Antiseptic
- Gauze pads
- Medical tape
- Latex gloves
- Moistened towelettes
- Needle and thread
- Triangular bandages
- Sterile adhesive bandages in different sizes
- Sterile roller bandages
- Safety pins
- Soap
- Sunscreen
- Thermometer
- Tube of petroleum jelly or baby oil
- Tweezers
- Non-prescription medications (aspirin and non-aspirin pain medications, cough syrup, anti-diarrhea medication, antacids, Syrup of Ipecac and laxatives). Consider children's strength medicines

- Insect repellent
- Scissors.

**Clothes and bedding.** Include at least one complete change of clothes and shoes for each family member. If possible, consider including:

- Bath towels
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Hats and gloves
- Raincoats
- Sunglasses
- Thermal underwear
- Boots with protective soles.

**Tools and emergency supplies.** Keep the following items handy:

- Batteries of all sizes. (Replace regularly so flashlights work when you need them.)
- Battery operated radio and television
- Cash and/or an emergency credit card
- Duct tape
- Emergency phone numbers
- Flashlights
- Non-electric can opener
- Paper cups and plates, and plastic utensils
- Plastic sheeting and garbage bags
- Sanitation supplies like liquid detergent, a plastic bucket with lid, disinfectant and household chlorine bleach
- Scissors
- Toiletries like soap, deodorant, toothpaste and feminine hygiene supplies
- Toilet tissue

### **Other items you might want:**

- Compass
- Small ABC fire extinguisher
- Paper and pencil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flares
- Tools such as a utility knife, pliers and a shut-off wrench for utilities
- Waterproof matches
- Whistle

**Special Items.** These items are for babies, elderly adults or family members with special needs and diets.

### **Babies**

- Formula
- Diapers
- Moist towelettes
- Powdered milk

### **Elderly adults**

- Medications
- Prescriptions
- Denture needs
- Eyeglasses
- Contact lenses
- Hearing aids

### **Entertainment**

- Books
- Games
- Quiet toys for children

## Important family documents

Copies of important documents such as birth and marriage certificates, powers of attorney, insurance policies, wills, passports and social security cards should also be kept in a safe location outside your home in a safe deposit box or at the house of a friend or family member out of town. Also include copies in a waterproof bag or container in the disaster supplies kit.

## Family preparedness checklist

- Post emergency telephone numbers of fire, police, schools and the family contact person by each telephone in your house
- Post the addresses and phone numbers for hospitals near your home, workplace and children's schools
- Teach your children how and when to call 9-1-1 for emergency help
- Figure out the best escape routes from your home; and find two ways out of each room
- Pick the safest places in your home to shelter in place (See "Sheltering in Place")
- Make a disaster supplies kit (See "Make a Disaster Supplies Kit")

## Practice and update your plan

- Quiz your children every six months on your family preparedness plan.
- Practice fire and emergency evacuations.
- Replace water every three months and food every six months in your disaster supplies kit.
- Test and recharge your fire extinguisher(s) according to the manufacturer instructions.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries at the beginning and end of Daylight Savings Time.

## Best places to shelter

Sheltering in place typically means staying in your home or workplace, but it could also require you to take shelter in the nearest building. The best place to shelter is inside a small, interior room with few or no windows. This does not necessarily mean sealing

your whole home. Sheltering in place is intended to keep you safe for a short time until it is either safe to go outside or you are taken somewhere else by rescue workers.

**If you are told to shelter in place, you could be instructed to:**

- Take your children and pets indoors right away.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve or a cloth until you can get inside.
- Close all windows in your home.
- Tape plastic garbage bags or plastic sheeting over windows.
- Tape around windows and doors to make an unbroken seal. Use duct tape to cover any exhaust fans, vents, electrical outlets or other openings.
- Turn off heating and air conditioning systems until you are instructed that it is safe to resume their use.
- Close your fireplace and any other place air can come in from outside.
- Go to the room that you've picked ahead of time as your shelter room. If this is a chemical attack, go to an aboveground room (not the basement) with the fewest windows and doors. A large room with a water supply or bathroom and a telephone is best. If there is a tornado or nuclear attack, sheltering in place should be in a room with no windows on the ground floor or basement of your home.
- Take your disaster supplies kit with you.
- Wet towels or cloths and stuff them in cracks under doors.
- Close window shades, blinds, or curtains if you're told there might be an explosion. Stay away from windows.
- Stay in the room and listen to your radio or watch your local news until you are told it is safe to come out or if you have to evacuate.
- Take special precautions when using water from the tap. Listen for instructions to determine if water is safe to drink and if it is safe to use the toilet and other facilities.
- Follow the instructions of emergency workers to find the nearest shelter if you are away from your home during the emergency.

**Listen to local radio and TV stations to receive specific instructions.**

# Preparing for Disasters

## Questions and Answers

### What if I am at work during an emergency?

Plan what to do if an emergency happens while you are at work. It is best to follow your company's emergency plan. If possible, keep a small Disaster Supplies Kit at your workplace. Don't forget to call your out-of-town family contact person to let them know where you are and to find out where other family members are.

- If you own a business or are a manager of other people, make sure they know what to do if there is an emergency.
- Make a preparedness plan and go over it with your employees.
- Make sure fire exits are marked clearly and an evacuation plan is posted where people see it.
- Make sure your employees will be able to shelter in place.
- Make sure people with disabilities are included in the plan.
- Have a Disaster Supplies Kit in the office and let everyone know where it is.
- Make sure your computer systems have an off-site back-up system so critical business records will not be destroyed.

### What shouldn't I do during a disaster?

Do not call Emergency Medical Services, 9-1-1 or the operator to ask for information in a disaster. Instead, listen to the radio and TV for emergency information. Do not go to the emergency room or the hospital unless you have suffered a serious injury. Call emergency numbers or go to the hospital only if someone's life is in danger.

**Listen to and trust law enforcement and disaster response officials. It is their job to protect you and help you stay safe.**

### What should I do during an emergency or disaster?

#### You can follow these basic steps:

- Be calm and patient.
- Follow the advice of local emergency officials.
- Listen to radio and television for news and instructions.



- If the disaster happens near you, check for people who are hurt. Give first aid and get help for seriously injured people.
- If the disaster occurs near your home while you are there, check for visible damage. Do not light matches or candles or turn on electrical switches. If there is gas or chemical in the air, a flashlight, match or candle could cause a fire or explosion.
- Check for fires, fire hazards or other household hazards. Sniff for gas leaks, starting at the water heater. If you smell gas or suspect a leak, turn off the main gas valve, open windows and get everyone outside quickly.
- Shut off any other damaged utilities.
- Make sure your pet does not run loose.
- Call your family contact person. Do not use your telephone again unless it is an emergency.
- Check on your neighbors, especially those who are elderly or disabled. See if you can help them.

## **What should I do with my children and elderly relatives?**

If you have children in school or daycare, or a relative who lives in a nursing home, find out what plans each place has for keeping people safe during an emergency.

Talk about these plans with your children. Make sure they understand what to do. Make sure they know to listen to their teachers and do what they are told.

You should also talk to your elderly relatives about what to do during an emergency. Tell them to listen to and trust their caregivers.

Keep in mind that teachers and nursing home caregivers are trained to handle emergencies. They will do their best to make sure your family members are safe.

Unless you are told to do so, do not try to pick up your children or elderly relatives from school or a nursing home during an emergency. It could put you and others in danger. Contact them through your family contact person and assure them that you will be reunited very soon.

## **What if we are told to evacuate?**

If there is a terrorist attack or disaster, you could be instructed to evacuate or leave

the place where you are. Follow the instructions from law enforcement and other response officials.

You might need to go to an emergency shelter. It is important to stay calm, listen carefully and follow instructions.

**If you are told to evacuate right away, you should:**

- Take your Disaster Supplies Kit and medicine with you
- Close and lock your windows
- Move quickly and calmly

**If you have time to pack, you should take:**

- Your Disaster Supplies Kit and medicine
- A change of clothing for each family member
- Eyeglasses, hearing aids, dentures, canes or walkers if needed
- Personal items like toothbrushes and deodorant
- Baby items like diapers, formula or baby food
- Books, puzzles, cards or games for entertainment

Shelters will not have everything you need. They usually only provide you with food and a small space for sleeping.

If you evacuate, bring your pets. Take them to one of the places where you know your pet can stay. Only service animals are allowed to stay inside the emergency shelter.

Turn off all appliances and lights except for your refrigerator and freezer. Check on neighbors to make sure they know about the emergency and offer to help people with disabilities or other special needs.

As soon as possible, call your family contact. Tell them where you are going and when you are expected to arrive.

Take only one car to the evacuation site. If you need a ride, ask a neighbor. If there are no neighbors who can help you, listen to the radio for instructions. Don't take shortcuts. For your safety, follow the exact route you are told to take.

## **What if I am in my car when disaster strikes?**

If a disaster or emergency situation, such as an explosion, makes it hard for you to drive, pull over to the side of the road, stop the car and set the parking break.

If the emergency could make roads more dangerous – such as during an earthquake, hurricane or explosion – do not drive on overpasses and bridges or near power lines, large signs and other hazards. If a power line falls on your car, you are at risk of electrical shock. Stay inside until a trained person can remove the line. Always assume a downed power line is active and dangerous.

If the incident involves chemicals or other materials released into the air, you might be instructed to set your car's ventilation system to "recirculate" to prevent the intake of potentially harmful air.

No matter what happens, listen to the radio and TV for information and instructions from disaster response officials.

## **What if I am exposed to biological or chemical agents?**

If you or someone with you is exposed to a biological or chemical agent, you could be required to go through decontamination and treatment. Listen to directions from the disaster response officials on the radio or television to determine what you need to do to protect yourself and family.

In a potential public health emergency, it might be necessary to restrict certain people's movements and interactions with others. Someone showing signs of infection may be isolated in a health care facility. A person who has been exposed – but not yet showing signs of the illness – might be quarantined in their home or other facility until the threat has passed.

## **What if I have to give someone first aid?**

It is important that you and your family know how to give someone first aid and CPR. Take a first aid and CPR class. If you have not taken a class, you can still help someone who is hurt. Follow the "Check-Call-Care" steps:

CHECK to make sure you can help the injured person. Check to see if the person is awake or breathing. For example, if the person is not breathing or is bleeding a lot,

then CALL out for help and contact Emergency Medical Services. While you wait for help, you might be able to CARE for the hurt person.

## Where can I learn more about the information in this booklet?

Visit the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) Web site for more information at <http://www.scdhec.gov>. Here you will find information on how to be prepared for emergencies.

You can also find out where emergency shelters are located near your home and workplace by visiting <http://scangis.dhec.sc.gov/dhecshelters/publicall/Default.asp>.

### These Web sites also have good information:

#### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.bt.cdc.gov>

#### American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org>

#### Together We Prepare

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/>

#### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

<http://www.hhs.gov>

## Family Preparedness Plan Contact Card

Fill out this card and give a copy to each of your family members and to your family contact.

<b>Emergencies:</b>	<b>9-1-1</b>
<b>Palmetto Poison Control Center:</b>	<b>(800) 222-1222</b>
<b>CDC:</b>	<b>(888) 232-4636</b>
<b>S. C. DHEC:</b> (During normal business hours)	<b>(803) 898-3242</b>

To ask for information, DO NOT call EMS, 9-1-1 or the operator. Dial these numbers only if someone's life is in danger. Do not try to go to the hospital unless you are seriously ill or injured. Listen to your radio or television for information.

**My area's Emergency Alert System radio station is:**

<b>Aiken/Augusta</b> .....	WBBQ-FM 104.3
<b>Midlands</b> .....	WCOS-FM 97.5
<b>Charleston/Low Country</b> .....	WNKT-FM 107.5
<b>Florence/Pee Dee</b> .....	WJMX-FM 103.3/AM 970
<b>Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand</b> .....	WKZQ-FM 101.7
<b>Greenville/Spartanburg/Upstate</b> .....	WFBC-FM 93.7

Our family contact person is: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Meeting Place (outside home): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Place (away from home): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What can I do today?**

**Be safe. Be smart. Make a plan so that you are prepared.**

*This publication provides health information for your general knowledge. Talk to your doctor about your concerns about any medical condition. DHEC does not recommend you diagnose or treat yourself for a serious illness.*

### Notes:















SOUTH CAROLINA

**Tactics  
Against  
Terrorism**

**Be Safe. Be Smart.**